

## Intervention: Educating mothers

Finding: Sufficient evidence for effectiveness

### Potential partners to undertake the intervention:

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| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nonprofits or local coalitions                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Businesses or labor organizations |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Schools or universities                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Media                             |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Health care providers                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Local public health departments   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> State public health departments                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Policymakers                      |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hospitals, clinics or managed care organizations | <input type="checkbox"/> Other:                            |

### Background:

The goal of educating mothers is not only to increase their breastfeeding knowledge and skills, but also to influence their attitudes toward breastfeeding. Breastfeeding education occurs most often during the prenatal period and is taught by someone with expertise or training. This instruction typically occurs within an informally structured small group setting but may be given one-to-one.

### Findings from the systematic reviews:

There is sufficient evidence that educating mothers is, especially during the prenatal period, an effective intervention for increasing initiation and short-term duration of breastfeeding.

The United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) conducted a meta-regression analysis of available randomized controlled trials of breastfeeding. Educational programs increased the proportion of mothers initiating breastfeeding (by 23 percent) and proportion continuing to breastfeed for 1-3 months (by 39 percent). These differences imply that enrolling 10 women in an educational program will result in 2 additional women initiating breastfeeding.

The combined efforts of education and support increased breastfeeding initiation 21 percent, breastfeeding of 1-3 months duration 36 percent, and 3-6 months duration 13 percent. However, the effects of combined education and support on initiation and continuation were not higher than the effect of education alone.

### Additional information:

The recommendations in this priority area are largely informed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Guide to Breastfeeding Interventions. Although the CDC report draws heavily on the reviews of the Cochrane Collaboration, a well-respected source of research in public health, its methodology for categorizing interventions is not outlined explicitly.

### References:

Shealy KR, Li R, Benton-Davis S, Grummer-Strawn LM. *The CDC Guide to Breastfeeding Interventions*. Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2005. Available online at:

[http://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/pdf/breastfeeding\\_interventions.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/pdf/breastfeeding_interventions.pdf)

U.S. Preventive Services Task Force - <http://www.ahrq.gov/clinic/uspstf/uspsbrfd.htm>